

## Meeting Needs of Volunteers Using Trained Trainers

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### Biographical Sketches of Authors

Chris Riggert is a streams biologist with Missouri Department of Conservation. He has been working in water quality issues for seven years with a varied background in fisheries, crayfish studies, and Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring. Chris works with all facets of the VWQM Program such as training, database management, and development of new education materials. He also coordinates the Stash Your Trash Program for the Stream Team Program which provides over 300,000 bags to canoe liveries per year. He is very energetic and will do anything for a fishing trip.

Tim Rielly is streams biologist with Missouri Department of Conservation. For the past two years he has been the coordinator of the Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring (VWQM) Program, which is part of the Missouri Stream Team Program. Previously, Tim was employed with Missouri Department of Natural Resources and coordinated Quality/Assurance Quality Control for the VWQM Program. In addition, he conducted special water quality monitoring projects for the state unconnected to volunteer monitoring. Tim has over 10 years experience in water quality monitoring and is experienced in all monitoring and sampling for surface water, specializing in streams. Tim is an experienced trainer, speaker, and technical writer, and has worked with agencies of all levels to improve water quality conditions.

### Abstract

The Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program (VWQM Program) is a part of the Missouri STREAM TEAM Program which, is a multi-agency sponsored water quality monitoring program formed for citizens in Missouri with an interest in water quality. The VWQM Program is a free training program open to anyone and teaches volunteers to monitor the water of Missouri's rivers and streams. The number one priority is education with data as a close second. The program has evolved to currently offer four levels of training, an Intro course, Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Each course or "Level" builds upon the previous course. Since its inception in 1993, the VWQM Program has grown exponentially; Introductory VWQM workshops are full or have waiting lists. While the Program continues to grow, staff levels have remained static due to budgetary requirements. As a result, VWQM Program staff had to be creative to meet the demand for training. As a solution, VWQM Program staff promoted and held several "Train the Trainers" workshops designed to train selected people to assist with teaching water quality workshops. Trainers were selected from a pool of dedicated volunteers, teachers and agency personnel that have all attended VWQM workshops prior to training. Trainers have helped to reduce staff time by reducing the amount of staff needed to teach a workshop. Trainers are beneficial to the Program by enabling staff by to meet the demand for training by the public and offering expanded workshop schedules. While there are many more benefits to using trainers there can be some draw backs such as; scheduling, data quality, consistency and, keeping them on track with presentations. How do you keep them on track and follow through?